DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 335 658 CS 010 681

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TITLE On the Move: Educating the Whole Child.
PUB DATE May 91
NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Reading Association (36th, Las Vegas, NV, May 6-10, 1991). Illustrations may not reproduce clearly.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *High Risk Students; Instructional Effectiveness; Junior High Schools; *Language Arts; Program Descriptions; *Remedial Programs; Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS *Education Consolidation Improvement Act Chapter 1; Illinois

ABSTRACT

Prairie-Hills Junior High School, located in a suburban school district 25 miles south of Chicago, has a Chapter 1 replacement language arts model that is remedial focusing on spelling, grammar and writing skills. In the classroom there is lots of interaction, lots of oral reading, discussing, and deciding. Students in the Chapter 1 program follow a regular 7-period schedule except that the Chapter 1 staff has input when there are choices to be made relative to students' support system. Components of the program include: (1) peer tutoring; (2) a critical thinking skills program; (3) STAGES (designed by classroom teachers and counselors from the Irvine School District in California; (4) a district-wide parent education program focusing on the at-risk family; (5) a junior high outreach program for those students who are suspended from school, and (6) after-school programs for latch-key children and children in need of tutorial help. Some of the seventh-grade students who go on to the eighth grade are chosen to work on their own newsletter "On the Move." One particular student was "shadowed" for his entire school day on three separate days. The student social and writing skills continue to improve. (Samples of students' correspondence, and a figure outlining the STAGES program are included.) (RS)

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ON THE MOVE: EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD

Becky J. Adams

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ON THE MOVE: EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD

Becky J. Adams

I'm going to talk about the Chapter 1 program in my school District - Prairie-Hills Elementary School District 144. I'd like to give you an idea of where Prairie-Hills is located: It is a suburban school district 25 miles south of Chicago. It encompasses portions of four small municipalities with seven schools. None of which are more than 5 miles apart. The District's seven schools serve approximately 3,5000 students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade.

The focus of the presentation today is at the one junior high school in the district whose enrollment approximates 740-760 students a year. At the junior high the students come with every at-risk factor imaginable. (overhead) This transparency speaks directly to the economic status of Prairie-Hills. However, there is a good percent of students who represent the average and above average achieving student. We have 30 8th grade students in the National Junior Honor Society. But, we have a total of 390 students identified as eligible for Chapter 1 services. We are, however, only able to serve 90 of the lowest of these students. I tell you this because it will help you understand the make-up of our Chapter 1 Replacement Project with a support system for underachieving students. The inhouse goal for our Chapter 1 junior high students is affective rather than cognitive. Why? We have a Chapter 1 Reading Project that services students in grades 1-2-3, then in grades 4-5-6 the students do not receive any Chapter 1 services. We are in the midst of a longitudinal study to show the special attention received from grades 1-2-3 will carry over. If not, then we pick them up again, based on some input from 6th grade teachers, in grade seven. At this point we have decided that the students are not being successful, based on some inability of theirs to make appropriate decisions and/or having been provided the skills to make appropriate decisions.

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I believe, except for the fact that I as an adult, read and have read at an age appropriate level for a long time, could be a Chapter 1 student in Prairie-Hills.

Different from a Chapter 1 student in Prairie-Hills, I keep myself in an environment that doesn't infringe on my self-esteem, rather, one that promotes and motivates academic growth. For example, I'm here learning in the conference. With that in mind - my belief - I want us to spend this time today experiencing how to use our energies in Prairie-Hills to make productive citizens of our Chapter 1 students. I will need your help to do this through a series of activities that we use with staff and students back in Prairie-Hills. From time to time I will talk about an observation I made with a student - Robert Jones - Robert is a 7th grade student in Prairie-Hills who receives Chapter 1 services. When I was informed that I had been invited to present here, I decided the best way to know whether the project works and the objectives as I had written them were being met - was to see for myself. So, I asked the Chapter 1 teacher to select a student for me to shadow on an intermitten schedule from advisory time in the morning til the end of the student's day. She selected Robert Jones. She asked me not to ask her why until the end. Last Thursday, was my last day with Robert and it was at that time that she shared. She said, "Robert's home circumstance - separated parents - 6 months with each made him very suspicious of adults and he needed, she thought, some continuity. Even though I would not be there everyday, it would be good for him to see that I would be there as I promised. Fortunately I was able to make the three appointments I scheduled, one during each of the 1st three grading periods.

We believe, as any educator believes, that each student can learn to be successful in his/her own unique way. Our job is to find out where the student's reinforcers are; therefore, we've tried to design a project to provide each student with various instructional and support services in an effort to reduce or eliminate these factors that have negatively influenced school success for these adolescent children up to this time: (overhead).

At Prairie-Hills Junior High we have a replacement Language Arts model that is remedial focusing on spelling, grammar and writing skills. We were very careful in selecting the teacher and instructional aide for this classroom because these children needed a little more, they, as primary students, still needed nurturing, an abundance of understanding, a friend, a surrogate parent BUT at the same time a firm teacher who had no problem setting parameters for children and following through with consequences set. We got just that kind of teacher and instructional aide for that class!

In the classroom there is lots of interaction, lots of oral reading, discussing, deciding. The risk propensity is extremely high. Students in that room don't seem to worry about making mistakes in front of each other, as adolescents do. You know how they are at that age. Peer consent - means alot. But it works that way because that's how the teacher has manipulated the environment in her classroom. She also takes an experienced based approach to her teaching. She uses materials that relate to the student's everday living, giving meaning to sentences, diagraming sentences that the students say in the class as they interact with each other, taking advantage of the situation to correct grammar and stretching their minds to find out why. It's refreshing to sit in this classroom. It is active yet controlled.

PRAIRIE-HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT 144

OVERHEAD (Overview)

The Chapter 1 students follow a regular 7 period schedule that is the same as all other students. The difference is when there are choices to be made relative to their support system the Chapter 1 staff has input. For example Peer Tutoring - the Chapter 1 staff decides with the Chapter 1 student what area each needs help, when and for how long. We call this area of Peer Tutoring the Think Tank. During advisory time, study hall time, before and after school, National Junior Honor Society students can be found in the north and south cafeterias on Tuesday, Thursday and alternate Fridays, tutoring students who are identified in that group of 390 students on a needs basis. This is how we give attention to those Chapter 1 eligibles at the seventh and eighth grade level who do not receive direct services.

OVERHEAD (Overview)

Critical Thinking Skills Program is one that our Chapter 1 students look forward to. It's like an incentive to do very well for the first two grading periods so that they may be scheduled into this advisory program. Each teacher is assigned an advisory or a lunch supervision period on a voluntary basis, therefore, the Critical Thinking program gets lots of creativity. My friend Robert is in the Critical Thinking Advisory this grading period.

This advisory also helps children decode messages better. For example, does this child have good critical thinking skills? You decide (cartoon).

(2)

MY BIOLOGY PROJECT IS DUE TOMORROW!! I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M GONNA DO!!
CALM DOWN, SKYLER... NOW, WHAT EXACTLY IS IT ABOUT?
LEAVES
THAT'S GREAT!! I'VE GOT A BUNCH OF BOOKS ABOUT TREES AND PLANTS!!
AND WE HAVE DOZENS OF SPECIES RIGHT HERE IN OUR BACKYARD!!
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11-12
WE COULD COLLECT A LEAF FROM EACH TREE — MOUNT THEM IN A NOTEBOOK!!
WE COULD HAVE A SECOND NOTEBOOK FOR EVERGREENS. COLLECT BARK FOR EXTRA CREDIT!!...
THAT'S THE KEY TO DOING WELL IN SCHOOL:
HARNESSING THE BOUNDLESS ENERGY OF PARENTS.

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(1 cartoon) OVERHEAD (Overview)

STAGES is a curriculum program that is great to help students develop skills in decision making. The unique and impressive part about STAGES is that it was designed by classroom teachers and counselors from the Irvine School District in California. So you see it was born out of a need tried and tested before marketing.

OVERHEAD STAGES

One of the classic stories I like to tell about STAGES when I'm working with a parent group is about the Traffic Ticket. When the siren goes off you're in complete denial. "I wasn't speeding!" By the time the officer reaches your car window, you're angry - "What's the problem officer?" He or she begins to tell you what you already know and that is you were speeding. Now you want to bargain "But officer I'm in such a hurry, I've never been stopped and I certainly wouldn't be speeding if I wasn't on my way to the hospital to meet my sick child who has been taken there by the school principal." The officer then proceeded to tell you more of what you know about the bad things that could happen to you while speeding, then you rush into a compromise. "I do understand officer and I appreciate you pointing this out to me, and then you either cry or have an emergency need to use the washroom. There is hope at the end of the story! You only got a warning ticket, or if you got a ticket you bounce right back into anger and so the story goes on and on. Just as we go through STAGES so do children and they need to know that it is OK to be angry it just depends on how you process what is happening to you.

STAGES

PRAIRIE-HILLS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

INSERVICE: ALL PRAIRIE-HILLS JUNIOR HIGH STAFF

COMMUNICATION TO PARENTS: PRAIRIE-HILLS JUNIOR HIGH NEWSLETTER
PRAIRIE-HILLS JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS

STUDENT PARTICIPATION

IN SCHOOL SUSPENSION ROOM
OCTOBER - JUNE

ADVISORY CLASSES
NOVEMBER - JANUARY
TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY

[illegible] SESSIONS
[illegible] OFFICE

OPTION II SUSPENSION
EVENING CLASSES

I think it is a perfect time now to do an activity. (See how many are present and have them count off so as to have at least 5 in each group). This is your task. You will have a discussion about your junior high school days. Each person will rank his/her junior high on a scale of 1-5 and state why. Everyone must actively listen to the discussion because at the end of 5 minutes Carolyn and I will choos one person from each group to tell all of us the names of your group members, the ranking from each group member and why.

EXERCISE

The research behind this cooperative experience suggests that the older the participant, the more positive his/her junior high school experiences. So you see it is an experience that could also date you. Almost everytime I've done this activity with an adult group it turns out to be in favor of the research. That further says we have more work to do and especially in the area of involving parents more in their child's education program.

OVERHEAD (Overview)

One of my responsibilities back in Prairie-Hills is to direct the Home-School Relations. We have put together a District-wide parent education program that focuses on the at-risk family. One of the activities that was included in the program for the 1991 school year is a parent seminar. At that seminar what I tried to do was give parents choices for identifying and sticking to the concept of parent involvement. If you will just tolerate me for a few minutes I'd like to share that imaginary slide presentaton with you.

We don't have a slide projector and screen here but lets pretend: Here you have this beautiful large screen, and here on this table is the projector with the slides in it. All you need to do now is sit back, take a deep breath, relax, and close your eyes. Click, click (C-C), the first picture you see there is (School's name) presents this slide presentation of accomplishments.

C-C Now we see a school community made up of schools, churches, houses, apartments, condos, stores, etc., there are parents, teachers, students, board members, business people with all the elements in place to make up a literate responsible society.

C-C Next we have a mentoring support system made up of extended family members such as aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins and ministers all highlighting school activities through team work.

C-C Next we see a family involved in early basic skills because everyone in this school community knows that parents are a child's 1st teacher. So parents are signing up for GED classes and literacy classes. In fact, we see a child wearing a seat shirt that reads, "I call my first teacher mommie." Isn't that a beautiful sight!

C-C Inside the school we see where principals and teachers have provided for family involvement programs. Look at that 3rd grade class with 100% attendance at the 1st parent/teacher conference, and over there in the junior high school we see parenting classes and a strong parent organizaton.

C-C Now just look at the parents ands teachers monitoring all of those quality education programs such as self-esteem programs, health education programs, Reading, Math, Science and Language Arts, Cultural Awareness and Career Educaton programs.

C-C This looks like a picture of a District newsletter: It is! And its highlighting various people who work for children in schools. It says here, often times these people are forgotten - The bus driver, custodians, secretaries, instructional aides, superintendent, business managers, public relations directors and many others. You know them.

C-C Well that looks like a picture of a safe house in the community, children know that some one is always at that house and they may go there whenever they are feeling threatened by the outside.

C-C Here's another picture of a community person seeing something unusual happening near the school that just does not look right so this person is reporting it to the principal.

C-C Look, this family is going over school rules together. They're making sure each child understands what is expected of the chld while he/she is in school.

C-C This is a picture of a kindergarten student and parent deciding on an appropriate place to do daily homework. They have just agreed that the student needs to do at least 15-20 minutes of school work each day whether

assigned by the teacher or not. The student will use her bedroom because the lighting is good there. Oh! now she's hanging a sign on the door. It says, "Quiet please - student at work - FUTURE UNDER CONSTRUCTION!"

C-C Here's a picture of the school's Spring Music Festival, my goodness! Standing room only. We have to make plans to move to a larger facility next year.

C-C This is a picture of a business person saying, "Thank you" to a teacher for preparing future workers in the community.

C-C It's not over yet - This group of people are having a surprise Thank you reception for all teachers in the school. They're saying; These are the people:

- who make the classroom a safe place.
- who hold high expectations for our students.
- who involve our children in a variety of learning experiences.
- who dignify student responses.
- who touch our children.
- who model self-awareness/self control.
- who listen.
- who insist on personal responsibility.
- who discipline our children with love and respect.

C-C Wait a minute - it looks like end of a grading period here - parents are smiling - Why? It sounds like they're pleased with their children's report cards.

Did they all make straight A's? NO! They didn't all make straight "A's" but the parents say that's OK because they've been actively involved this marking period and they understand why their child got a "C" in "Science" rather than an "A". It's OK the parent said, "We'll try harder next grading period."

Thus ends our slide presentation.

Wow, was that nice, but I know there are some of you who will still say - It can't be done - The School system is doomed. The teachers don't care.

OVERHEAD (Overview)

The Junior High Outreach program is an extention of the STAGES program. It is designed for those students who, after all is said and done - still didn't get it. But we won't give up on them yet.

OVERHEAD (STAGES/Suspension)

This very low number of students, usually categorized as the 'Z' group, when suspended during the school year and if suspended to the in school suspension room will get another dose of STAGES through role play activities and self assessment surveys. If suspended out of school, the student and parent attend evening classes - in separate rooms - same topics. The culminating evening class puts the parents and students together to work out a contract for improved behavior in school. The contract is then signed by the STAGES facilitator, the student and the parent.

OVERHEAD (Overview)

The Home/School Coordinator works closely with students, staff and parents. Her main roll is to effect positive communications among all of us. She is responsible for facilitating at least one mini workshop in each school or the school's community. For the most part we try hard to get parents into the school as opposed to in the homes. We want them to begin to feel comfortable in the schools and also to learn the strategies and procedures necessary to solve problems within school walls. In addition the school's social worker and a classroom teacher have been trained to work directly with the Parent education program. Three of these parent education courses are held at the junior high school each year, one in October, one in January and one in March. While enrollment is usually low in these classes, attendance is good. We started these classes in 1987 and we've serviced approximately 210 parents not including those who attended evening option classes.

OVERHEAD (Overview)

Clubs Program is a real necessity at Prairie-Hills and regretfully, it is in trouble as we speak. The teachers at Prairie-Hills Junior High are finding that they need to work second jobs in most cases and are unable to volunteer to supervise these activities. We're in the process of talking about other ways that they may be supervised for next year. But the after school programs provide benefits, to working parents, latch key children, children in need of tutorial help and just overall environmental exposure that many of our children would not be exposed to were it not for Clubs.

4/30/91

Dear Mrs. Adams [illegible]
I really enjoyed your company [illegible]
[illegible] I tryed to [illegible] a picture
of [illegible] you
write about me in [illegible]
maybe [illegible] you have [illegible]
[illegible] by the
way [illegible]

P.S.
I have
to go
peace

Thanks A lot Mrs. Adams
keep up the good work

From Robert
Jones

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Dear Mr. president,
I dont like it when
you make wars. I don't
want you to do that
cause . people don't like
that you should stop
sending wars. you should
use words instead of using
guns. I don't like it when
you threat about
war cause it's bad
for our land. My
name is Maria. I'm four and three
quarters. my big sister is Zoe.
she wrote this letter
for me. She is a big
help to me. I use words
when I have a problem
and you shold too.
from Maria.

We have the:

Chess Club, Stock Market Club, Basic Art Club, Choral Club, Tutorial Club and the Rap Club.

Servicing about 75 students at this point becuase we don't provide transportation.

This support system that I have been talking about is in essence a functional curriculum that is designed to support and/or enhance the required academic curriculum. I think it is working, however, it has not been working long enough to have all the data in yet. But, for those 45 seventh graders that we see the following year and for the past two years they have remained with the program in 8th grade based solely on test scores. In the 8th grade students are selected to work on the Chapter 1 parent newsletter called "ON THE MOVE". Eighth grade students in the FY89 year named the one page newsletter. In this letter they write about their feelings, their accomplishments and their concerns under teacher direction.

I want you to know I spent three full days with my friend Robert. I observed a difference in his social skills on each visit. Robert is scheduled in to mostly remedial classes but is progressing. He earned honorable mention at the end of the third grading period. But most of all his writing skills are ones that he is proud of so much so he wrote me a letter. OVERHEAD (letter) This letter is very dear to me as I'm sure it is to Robert. Therefore, I wanted to share it with you. When children write it just seems that it comes from the heart rather than from intellect. For example, here is another letter that was written by a child close to Robert's age. But she wrote the letter for her little sister Maria. We need to continue to have children ready to put their thoughts and feelings on paper.

SO. . . . . .

OVERHEAD (Olivera)

IF WE ALWAYS DO

WHAT WE HAVE ALWAYS

DONE, WE WILL ALWAYS

GET WHAT WE HAVE

ALWAYS GOT.

JAMES OLIVERO